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"Theological Education at Its Finest"

By Rev. Sarah Kim



seven participants from the Southeast Conference, UCC, spent the weekend engaging in critical theological reflection, creative worship experience, and a time of joyous fellowship.

On April 8-10, 2011, the Thailand 2011 trip participants reunited at the scenic setting of Calvin Center, a retreat center located in Hampton, GA. Along with their three facilitators—Dr. Greg Carey, Rev. Kathy Clark, and Rev. Dr. Sarah Kim—the seven seminarian participants from Lancaster Theological Seminary (Lancaster, PA) and the

This has been the first gathering of the group since the three-week trip to Thailand took place in January. The purpose of the post-trip retreat is to provide an opportunity for the participants to process their intensive learning experience as a group and to envision a normative praxis—for one's self, the church, and their communities.

Processing the learning experience is an integral part of the global theological education. The intensity of the Thailand immersion is apparent in many aspects of the

trip, including its global, cross-cultural context, the uncommon study subjects of inter-faith dialogue, conflict resolution and peace-building, and the complexities

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THAILAND TRIP



June 3
Application Deadline



associated with living and learning in a group of this size within the given time frame.

UCC News

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Headlines from the United Church of Christ

[WCM executive calls for 'complete withdrawal' of Ugandan anti-gay legislation](#)

The Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, the UCC's executive minister for Wider Church Ministries, issued a statement today (May 11) calling for the Ugandan government to drop legislation that calls for the imprisonment of homosexuals.



No one, and I say this with a bit of confidence, comes out of such experience without being changed in some way.

The changes the learners experience have both collective and individual dimensions. The predominant sentiment among the participants was a sense of gratitude in being able to participate in such a special learning opportunity. The group candidly discussed the challenges of being exposed to a part of the world where issues of displaced Burmese refugees, HIV/AIDS, regional violence, and religious diversity pose societal problems that engender division, injustice, and suffering.



Apparently, we had to look really hard to find any kind of hope in all this, which brought us back to our faith—God—and the question of our call in the world as ministers, as Christians, and as fellow human beings. In the end, each of us came out appreciating what we have—our religion, culture, community, faith, and the peace that we can claim on a daily basis. In the end, the urgency of the named issues stimulated our creative minds and souls towards action; some of us wrote poems, wrote essays, sang songs, created photo collages, made a documentary video, designed worship, shared our learning within our communities, and we all prayed, prayed and hoped. In my view, this is



theological education at its finest. [Link here for 2012 Thailand Trip Application.](#)
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